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| APPLICATION NO. | FILING DATE | FIRST NAMED INVENTOR | ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. | CONFIRMATION NO. |
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| 10/529,785 | 03/30/2005 | Francois Gillet | Q86671 | 1485 |

23373 7590 11/22/2006

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WASHINGTON, DC 20037

| EXAMINER |
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MATTHEWS, TERRELL HOWARD

| ART UNIT | PAPER NUMBER |
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3654

DATE MAILED: 11/22/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/529,785

Applicant(s)

GILLET, FRANCOIS

Examiner

Terrell H. Matthews

Art Unit

3654

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>3/30/05</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Burns (US-6953906) in view of Kechel (2003/0155282).

Referring to claims 1-3,7. Burns discloses a "Delivery Point Sequencing Mail Sorting System With Flat Mail Capability". See Figs. 1-8 and respective portions of the specification. Burns further discloses subjecting flats to a first sorting pass in a first sorting machine (12a) having a certain number of first sorting outlets and configured for a certain sorting plan; subjecting the flats to a first sorting pass in a second sorting machine (12b) having a certain number of second sorting outlets that correspond to respective ones of the first sorting machine, and the sorting plan for the sorting machines being designed so that a set of delivery points of the postman's walk are assigned to each first sorting outlet or to each second sorting outlet respectively; grouping together mail items coming from each corresponding first and second sorting outlet to form as many groups of mail items as there are first and second sorting outlets and subjecting the groups of mail items to a second sorting pass using a set of trays wherein a group of mail items, delivery points are assigned to the respective trays from the set of delivery points assigned to the sorting outlets from which the mail items of the

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group of mail come; and distributing the mail items from the group of mail items into the various trays as a function of the delivery points assigned to the trays and repeating the process for each group of mail items (see at least Col. 2 l. 55-64, Col. 4 l. 9-41). Burns does not wherein letters are subjected to the first sorting pass or wherein grouped mail items comprise flats and letters. Kechel discloses a "Method of Sorting Mail For Carriers Using Separators". See Figs. 1-3 and respective portions of the specification. Kechel further discloses a method of preparing a postman's walk in a plurality of sorting passes with mail items including both letters (Ln) and large-format flat items or flats (Fn), the method being characterized in that it comprises: subjecting the letters to a first sorting pass in a first sorting machine having a certain number of first sorting outlets and configured for a certain sorting plan; subjecting the flats to a first sorting pass in a sorting machine including sorting outlets; grouping together the mail items to form groups and subjecting the groups of mail items to a second sorting pass (See at least Sects. 0020-0024). It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the method and apparatus of Burns to include the teachings of Kechel so that flats and letters could be sorted and grouped together into respective trays which were assigned delivery points so that a postman's delivery process could be more efficient and the process could be more timely and efficient wherein flats and letters could be processed and sequenced together.

Referring to claim 4. Burns does not disclose that in order to distribute a group of mail items into the trays, each tray is caused to display information representing the delivery point assigned to the tray. It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary

skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the method and apparatus of Burns so that the trays displayed information representing the delivery point so that operator is informed and up to date on information pertaining to each tray which will make his delivery process easier, more efficient, and make it less susceptible to delivery errors. It should be noted that it is generally noted in the field of art to provide delivery trays with display information.

Referring to claims 5-6,8. Burns does not disclose wherein during distribution of the mail items into the trays, the mail items are bagged. Kechel discloses the method and apparatus as discussed above. Kechel further discloses wherein a bundling apparatus (24) and wherein the bundling apparatus can comprise a bagging machine wherein the mail items in the trays (22) can be bagged (See at least sect. 0024). It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the method and apparatus of Burns to include the teachings of Kechel wherein the mail items in the trays could be bagged and so that all of the mail items coming from the same tray could be bagged in so that mail items could be packaged together for easier delivery or more efficient secondary operations.

Conclusion

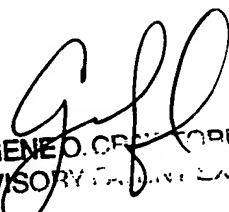
The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Hendrickson (US-2001/0009234) discloses a "Flats Bundle Collator" wherein mail items are separated and sorted into groups of items and sequenced.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Terrell H. Matthews whose telephone number is (571)272-5929. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8am - 4:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kathy Matecki can be reached on (571) 272-6951. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

THM


GENE O. CRAWFORD
SUPERVISORY EXAMINER